

# Marriage Aspects Of Minangkabau Matrilineal Systems In Hamka's *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the cultural elements found in the literary work of *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck* in the form of Novel written by Buya Hamka. It utilizes an extrinsic approach in which there are some interpretations and explanations about cultural elements in Hamka's *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*. It describes the aspects of marriage based on Minangkabau custom especially practiced in Batipuh, West Sumatera that still hold fast to the tradition and culture very much concerned to the female (matrilineal) lineage. There are several elements of culture on the marriage of Minangkabau matrilineal systems in the novel of *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*, namely ; 1. Mamak (mother's brother) whether he is eldest or youngest ,he has a huge role and responsibility to preserve the tradition of Minangkabau Matrilineal systems in the family of Minangkabau, West Sumatera and he will bring the matters of custom into the meeting of Niniak Mamak .2. If a man wants to marry a woman, Niniak Mamak from the man directly has to come to the family of the women asking about the marriage . 3. Someone who has a right to receive or deny a proposal of marriage is not the woman or even the parents or aunt (mandeh) of the woman. Mamak (uncle), mother's brother has a big role for it and then he brings it into the meeting of Niniak Mamak in order to get a decision to receive or not. 4. Mamak (uncle) of a Minangkabau woman will just receive a man from Minangkabau who has a clan from lineage of mother (Piliang, Sikumbang, or Chaniago etc ) will be accepted being a husband for niece . Mamak will not accept a mixed race man to be a husband for a niece in the conservative society of Minangkabau Matrilineal systems, West Sumatera

Keywords: Marriage, Matrilineal System, Minangkabau, *Tenggelammnya Kapal Van Der Wijck*

## INTRODUCTION

Human beings have various experience of life that sometimes can rise problems , happiness, and sadness. The expression of imagination, feeling and reality of life in written record stated by human, of course, it uses a language. Language is a means for people to communicate their experience of life and cultural values. This can expand out the various aspects of literature as human creation. Literature is a means of human creation that conveys social life and reality. It has an artistic value that can give a pleasure for the people. Through Literature, human expresses the culture or tradition in the form of its literary works. Literature is also defined as body of written work of a particular culture or people, Girling ( 1978 : 541). It describes the aspects of culture or tradition in one country which enable to enrich human creation.

Instead of giving a pleasure, literature also conveys the expansion of moral values to the readers. Moral lessons can give a natural respon for human to implement them in reality. Literature can be revealed in the means of poetry, play and prose. Prose is one of literary works that has no matricial pattern , and conveys human experience of life in particular culture or people in certain periode. It is a human creation full of imagination, reality of life, and interesting experience of human life. Prose usually uses a novel as the medium to reveal its thought. Novel is a long story in prose meant primarilly for entertainment, and presenting a realistic picture of life , Tilak ( 1992 : 112). As a literary work, novel ususally potrays the characters and presents an organized series of events and settings. it is an account of life, and depicts the social life aspects and the universe of everything in human life.

One of the novels describing a culture or tradition of one country in Minangkabau, Batipuh, West Sumatera, is *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck* by Buya Hamka. It describes the marriage aspects of Minangkabau Matrilineal Systems in which a proposal of marriage from a man ' Zainuddin ' to a woman ' Hayati ' refused by tradition. Niniak Mamak has a right to refuse it because a man is not pure Minang descent and he is a mixed race man who has no clan from the line of his mother , and he is called as ' Anak Pisang Tak Bersuku '. Otherwise, Hayati has a clan ' Sikumbang ' and it can give a graceful respect to family and society, and it , of course, must be preserved and maintained by all member of the family . Niniak Mamak just receives the other man ' Aziz ' who is purely from Minang descent and has a clan from the lineage of his mother , and he has a noble background honored by Hayati's family . Although the woman doesn't love the man whom received by Niniak Mamak, she has to accept him in a force of tradition as an obedient women to family. A love is contrary to tradition rising a sorrowful and painful . Although Hayati's physique possessed by Aziz , however, a true love in her deepest heart only to Zainuddin.

## MINANGKABAU

The country of Minangkabau is a so vast landscape traversed by the Bukit Barisan extending from the northern to the southern tip. Its natural environment is so beautiful with the verdant hills and mountains that are always adorned by the roar of wind accompanying with the sound of the ripple of flowing river water and the waves crashing on the coast in the coastal areas that make the natural landscape of Minangkabau become more beautiful. According to Dt. Rajo Penghulu (2004:20), Minangkabau areas comprises three parts: 1. *Darek* (highland areas) symbolized by three mountains such as Marapi, Sago and Singgalang mountains, 2. *Pasisia* (coastal areas) along the western coast of Central Sumatera stretching from current border area of Bengkulu (Muko-Muko) up north to the border with Southern Tapanuli, 3. *Rantau*, an area where big rivers flow and empty in the eastern coast of Sumatera bordering on the Strait of Malacca and the South China Sea and even up to an area in Malaysia called Rantau Nan Sembilan (Negeri Sembilan).

The people of Minangkabau from various regions like to keep moving to other areas, but the Minangkabau customs still continue to be upheld and implemented. Where on earth we stand, there the sky we uphold. Wherever we are, the Minangkabau traditions and customs still continue to be preserved. The life still remains strong with the customs and traditional rules. The tradition cannot be cracked by the heat and be weathered by rain must keep being lived wherever the natives are. In their everyday life, most of Minangkabau people work on the ricefields, farming and fishing (fishermen). Mutual cooperation system is still firmly rooted in Minangkabau society and this can still be seen in Batipuh and other areas, share one's joy and sorrows, this is always applied to strengthen the ties of brotherhood, kinship and friendship. For example, when the ricefield of a family is already yellowing and it is about time to harvest, then the family, relatives and neighbors or closest community are ready to work together to help weeding the paddy ready to be harvested.

In Minangkabau, the kinship and social system still continues to practice matrilineal systems *basuku bakeh ibu babangso bakeh bapak*, in terms of clan follow the mother and in terms of ethnicity follow the father, Dt. Rajo Penghulu (2004:21). In matrilineal systems, the sons or the daughters take their clan from their mother's for example, Sikumbang, Caniago, Piliang, Jambak, Koto, Manday and so forth. The daughter is the child who can extend the clan of her family to their children, the sons cannot extend the clan of their mother to their children. If the sons are married, their children will use the clan of their mothers, but the married sons can get their customary title from their biological fathers that they can put the title Sidi, Sutan, Bagindo and Marah before their names.

## MATRILINEAL SYSTEM IN MINANGKABAU

In Minangkabau community, the application of kinship system is based on the lineage of mother in a family, the expansion of descendants is associated only with the female or mother's side. So it can be said that the marriage is done to support in maintaining the descendants and clan of the wife.

There are several matrilineal systems in Minangkabau community such as the descent is grouped based on the maternal lineage. The clan is formed based on the maternal lineage. The marriage is done with the people from different clan (exogamy). The nature of a marriage in the system of Sumendo, in-law relationship in which the husband stays in his wife's house. Rights and inheritance are bequeathed by a *Mamak* (an uncle) to the children of his sisters (Radjab, 1969: 17).

The family tree of a big family is grouped based on the maternal lineage. The *Mamak* in a family (can be the elder and younger brothers of mother) can establish a *Niniak Mamak* who is highly influential in the application of the customs and traditions in a family. This *Niniak Mamak* has the absolute influence on deciding the marriage proposal from a man to his niece. The paternal lineage is called *Bako* but, according to Minangkabau culture, *Bako* cannot extend the lineage or clan to his children. Therefore, it is not uncommon if we find that there are Minangkabau family members who feel strange or less close to their family or relatives from their fathers' side. Clannish descendant of a family is taken from the maternal lineage and it can only be passed on according to the tribal customs and traditions of the daughters of the family. A son cannot continue his maternal lineage or the clan of his mother, but when he gets married his children will receive the lineage or clan from his wife.

Every Minangkabau man must get married to the one of different clan (exogamy). The ideal marriage for a Minangkabau man, according to Minangkabau culture, is to marry "anak mamak" (his uncle's daughter). Of course, his uncle's children have different clan because they take the clan from their mother. Therefore, uncle's daughters can extend the clan or lineage of a mother. For example, a man of Piliang clan may not marry a woman from Piliang either. He must marry a woman from other clan such as Tanjung, Caniago, Jambak and so forth. In case of violation of custom such as the incident of marriage between a man and a woman from the same clan, then both of them will receive customary sanctions in which both of them could be expelled from their homeland. *Niniak Mamak* plays an important role in providing this customary sanction.

In the system of Sumendo, the husband visits his wife's house. It means that the husband will move in to his wife's house and the husband is called "urang sumando" (in-law). As the husband of their daughter, the "urang sumando" is highly respected by his wife's family that never calls him by his name but his custom title inherited from his biological father such as Sidi, Sutan, Bagindo and Marah. The title of Sidi is taken from the lineage of the Sheik, the title of Sutan is taken from the lineage of the Kings, the title of Bagindo is taken from the lineage of Bagindo Rasullullah Muhammad SAW, and Marah is taken from the lineage of the ordinary people.

*Mamak* (uncle) passed down his rights and inheritance to his nieces or, in other words, from a brother to the daughters of his sister. From generation to generation, the inheritance from the uncle can be taken and used by his nieces for the benefit of custom, for example, when his

niece is going to get married, the money from this inheritance can be used to help, pay the cost of her wedding party. The sons do not have the right to receive any inheritance from his uncle. This custom has created a tradition that a Minangkabau man must work hard such as in the fields of farming and trading, or migrating to the land of other people with a determination that he must be successful in his life. It is a shame or taboo for a Minangkabau man to return to his homeland when he is in difficult circumstances or bankrupt because he has to prove that he can succeed in other country and is able to help the members of his family who still live in his homeland or village.

### **Marriage Aspects of Minangkabau Matrilineal Systems in Hamka's *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck***

In conservative Minangkabau, a marriage of pure Minang woman, Hayati, decided by mother's brother called Mamak. A great responsibility on a niece must be done to take care and conduct her for the future. In Minangkabau there is a proverb 'Anak Dipangku Kemenakan Dibimbing', it means that Mamak as mother's brother instead of having a family and taking a care of it, Mamak also conducts and has attention to a niece until being adult for the sake of her future. All regulations of Minangkabau tradition in a family must be known and implemented. Mamak, of course, has a big role for it in a family.

If a man comes to the parents of a woman asking for a marriage in the society of Minangkabau, especially in Batipuh, West Sumatra, they will fully give that responsibility to Mamak. He then brings that proposal of a marriage to Niniak Mamak in order to have a consideration of it. Consideration based on tradition of Minangkabau must be implemented to maintain the descent of trace. Niniak Mamak has a seat together to discuss, consider and decide whether a proposal for a marriage from a man received or not. The position of Niniak Mamak here has really a great influence to preserve the tradition of marriage in Minangkabau. Niniak Mamak has to know the background of a man, his family, and the clan of the man which taken from the lineage of mother. Those are the most criteria and basic consideration for Niniak Mamak to receive a man as husband for a niece.

Mamak, brother of Hayati's mother forbids her to have an affair of love with Zainuddin as a mixed race man or 'Anak Pisang Tak bersuku'. It's considered to avoid a shame in the society of Batipuh that a pure Minang woman can not be married by a mixed race man, Zainuddin, because he has no clan from the lineage of his mother. His mother is from Bugis (Makassar) and just his father as Minang person. It is forbidden for the conservative society of Minangkabau to marry woman with a man who has no clan from mother's lineage of Minangkabau. In order to have no longer relation with Hayati, her Mamak asks Zainuddin for leaving the village and a way from Batipuh. Zainuddin obeys and moves to Padang Panjang to stay with his family and also learn about Islam deeply. His love cracks down into pieces, he has to be far away from his lover, Hayati. They love each other but the tradition makes them be a part. The great love makes Hayati leave for Padang Panjang to meet Zainuddin instead of having a look at the horse race. However, along staying in Padang Panjang she stays in her friend's house, she does not have a chance to meet Zainuddin longer, it is just a sudden moment in a few minutes, Hayati meets him at around the area of horse race. She is in a rush directed by her friend Khadijah into the entrance of horse race stage. In Padang Panjang Hayati meets Aziz, her friend's brother and they go to the horse race together. Along staying in Padang Panjang, Aziz's mother sees Hayati as a good woman and she suggests Aziz to rise a proposal of marriage to her.

In order not to have a lost of Hayati, Zainuddin, also asks a marriage to her through a letter. This becomes a consideration to Niniak Mamak. In the tradition of Minangkabau, of course, Niniak Mamak has a right to decide a marriage for their niece. There are two proposals of a marriage coming namely from Zainuddin and Aziz. Niniak Mamak sit together and have a discussion to decide who will be received as a husband of Hayati. After having a great discussion and consideration, ultimately Niniak Mamak refuses a proposal of marriage from Zainuddin, because he is not pure Minangkabau, he has no clan from the lineage of his mother, he is mixed race man from Makasar and Minangkabau as 'Anak Pisang Tak Bersuku'. In order to preserve and maintain Hayati's clan 'Sikumbang' and it can also get good respect from the family and society, As Datuk in that village, Hayati's Mamak, of course, refuses Zainuddin. Niniak Mamak just accepts a proposal of marriage from Aziz, a pure Minang man from Padang Panjang, he has original clan from his mother's lineage and he is also from the rich family and noble background. Niniak Mamak forces Hayati to receive Aziz as her husband, although she does not love him. She, in advance, does not have happiness living with Aziz because he is very arrogant and temperamental in behaviour. She does not have a nice love like what Zainuddin has ever given to her. Her love cracks down from him because of tradition. When Hayati lives together with Aziz as a family, they find some problems, one of them is a job. Aziz and Hayati have to leave their village and go to Surabaya, he was sent there to have one position in a job.

Along staying and working in a new position in Surabaya, Aziz usually gambles away his entire possessions until he has great debt. He can not run the company well, even he make it into bankruptcy. He always drinks alcohol, has affair with the other women, finally he is fired from his job. Hayati feels deepest wound after seeing all possessions of her jewels taken into gambling by Aziz, even the house as a place to live, is confiscated. It is a shame for a Minang man comes back to the village in the condition of failure in a career. It makes him hopeless and finally Aziz commits suicides.

## CONCLUSION

In conservative Minangkabau, Matrilineal systems are still strictly held and done by the society in a marriage. Some values of this system can be explored in the novel 'Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der Wijck' by Buya Hamka, namely:

If a man wants to marry a woman, Niniak Mamak from that man has to come directly to the family of the woman. Of course, Niniak Mamak from the woman will receive and consider such marriage proposal. In this novel, Niniak Mamak from Aziz's family directly comes to ask in a marriage between Aziz and Hayati. This marriage proposal is received and agreed by Hayati's Niniak Mamak. While Niniak Mamak refuses a marriage proposal from Zainuddin that is only sent through the letter. That reduces the value of tradition in Minangkabau.

In conservative Minangkabau, someone who has a right to receive or deny a proposal of a marriage is not the woman, or even the parents or aunt (mandeh) of the woman. Mamak, mother's brother has a big role for it. He has a right to receive or not and bring it into the meeting of Niniak Mamak. In *Tenggelamnya Kapal Van Der wijck*, Hayati can not refuse the decision of her Mamak to receive Aziz as her husband although she does not love him. In this case, there is a proverb for a Mamak 'Seorang Mamak Mampu Menghitam Putihkan Seorang Kemenakan'. In Minangkabau matrilineal system, Mamak has a great influence to a family based on tradition.

If a marriage proposal comes to a woman, her Mamak will bring it to the meeting of Niniak Mamak to take a discussion or consideration about the background of the man, his family, clan and his personality whether he is a good person or not. In this novel, when a proposal of a marriage comes from Aziz, Hayati's Mamak brings it into the meeting of Niniak Mamak to discuss the background of Aziz, whether he is from good family or not.

In Batipuh, Minangkabau, Mamak of woman will just receive a man who has a clan from lineage of a mother whom will be accepted to be a husband for a niece. Hayati has a clan of Sikumbang. It is taken from her mother's clan. Hayati's Mamak refuses Zainuddin because he is a mixed race man, and has no clan from the lineage of his mother. Finally Hayati's Mamak receives another man 'Aziz' who has a clan from the lineage of his mother and he is also from noble family.

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